

EAST METRO YOUTH SERVICES

SERVICE PLAN

2010 - 2011

May, 2009

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

At the writing of this document, EMYS is in the final throes of preparing for CMHO Accreditation 2010. As well, we are reaching the conclusion of our current strategic planning cycle, which began in 2006/2007. Both are important ventures and have demanded that all staff, Board members and volunteers recognize and respect the imperatives that are fundamental to achieving the successful results which we seek - communication, collaborative focus and teamwork.

While this Service Plan document is remarkable for its numerous, comprehensive and thoughtful program reviews, statistical reports, and positive outcomes, what is most notable is that despite the diversity amongst programs, there exists tremendous commonality, as well as synchronicity, amongst these many service areas. Moreover, they are also all very much aligned with some of the defining service principles of this agency. For example, all programs have remarked upon the increased severity of client needs/challenges/struggles and concomitantly upon the need for more complex professional interventions. This perception has largely been borne out of our BCFPI and CAFAS data. As well, all of our program staff seem committed to accept and defend that EMYS "...stays around until the job gets done." This sentiment, more succinctly and deliberately reflected in the very name of one of our programs, the WIT Program, [Whatever it Takes Program] is illustrated in a variety of ways from an analysis of the lengths of stay in our residential programs to a discussion of the impact of post discharge follow-up in our Day Treatment programs.

The enduring commitment to serve those most in need/"at risk" and then to do "whatever it takes" for as long as it takes, are the mature manifestations of the agency's enduring culture of thriving on professional service challenges. And, it was in this spirit that EMYS embarked upon the deliberate adoption of evidence based practice and/or practice based in evidence and the commitment to outcome measurement.

When coupled with the passion and compassion which EMYS staff have historically brought to the work, the implementation of evidence based practices has, at a minimum, raised the bar with respect to continuous quality improvement. EMYS was an early adopter of practices such as MST, CBT and the systems of care/case management model of practice. This service plan describes our most recent efforts and successes to further the implementation of such sophisticated practices as DBT in our Day Treatment and Residential Treatment Programs, Motivational Interviewing and Emotionally Focused Therapy within our Home Based Programs, as well as to bring ART and Stages of Change Theory to our work with our VIP clientele.

The proliferation of intensive group supervision to supplement individual staff supervision and team meetings is another case in point, and the reported payback in this regard is reflected in the improvements in multi-disciplinary team functioning. As we move forward, having determined that issues related to substance abuse require further inquiry, plans are in place to consider the implementation of the GAINS survey so as to more readily identify youth with substance use issues and then to provide staff with refresher training with respect to evidence based treatment modalities.

In the last number of years, as EMYS staff strove to realize the latest iteration of our Strategic Plan, many of the aforementioned practices had been established as strategic goals. Similarly, to ensure that EMYS furthered its ambition with respect to service excellence and service quality, EMYS refined the implementation of measures and tools on behalf of our clinical populations such as BCFPI and CAFAS, as well as developed our own home grown goal attainment measurements. Similarly, our VIP Program has moved forward in the implementation of outcome and impact measurement and management as part of the United Way's CIMM project, which is designed to measure the impact of community development programs across common domains. What is brand new in this year's service plan is the that we can now report measured results for our Developmental Service Program as it has begun the implementation of the Adaptive Behaviour Assessment System (ABAS II), a measurement tool specifically designed to assess the outcomes of those youth who participate with us in our growing Developmental Services Program.

Finally, our comfort and capacity to undertake outcome measurement has provided us with a platform to engage many of our staff in even more ambitious program evaluation activities. This year EMYS will conclude its work with the LaMarsh Centre at York University and the University of Winnipeg to render the final evaluation of the RISE Program. Efforts are also underway to evaluate the WIT Program and the Youth Outreach Worker (YOW) program and we have also received a grant from MCYS to prepare for the evaluation of our newest Day Treatment Program, Preparing for Tomorrow.

In summary, at this point in time it is fair to say that all of our service programs are subject to the application of some outcome evaluation measures. They are complimented by feedback obtained via annual consumer and referral source surveys. Almost as important as the activities themselves however, is the extent to which staff have readily accepted and in some instances embraced the imperatives around research and evaluation. We take this as a sign that EMYS is truly a community committed to ongoing learning.

It was reported in the last service plan that EMYS would be establishing several "action teams," having identified issues that we believed required an intensity and an urgency of focus. As we review the work of these teams reported in this latest Strategic Planning Implementation document, it is easy to be impressed with the extent to which they tackled the complexities of the issues/challenges within their scope. Most notable is the progress made by the Diversity

Team, and the policy work of the Technology team. We also understand that the members of the Supervisor's Action Team are very pleased with the opportunity afforded agency supervisors to participate in a peer led community of practice, which at the very least, contributes to EMYS succession planning. Albeit with the dread fear of transforming into a "committee" and then of slowing themselves down, the Action Teams have expressed the desire to continue their respective work, and we anticipate that they will continue to build upon their success with respect to technology policy development and implementation, LGBTQQ training, the development of a VIP stakeholder survey instrument, and Studio 2 revenue generation.

In the latter part of 2008 and then throughout 2009, considerable staff energy has been dedicated to the establishment of what has come to be known as Level 300. Level 300 is described as a safe space for youth in the Scarborough community to access support, information and programming. It houses such programming as our CIC funded ISAP and HOST Programs, Say Word Journalism Program, Studio 2 Multi Media Program, PREP Employment Readiness Program and ACYES, to name a few. Each and every one of our funders has made a small financial contribution to this important enterprise.

Perhaps because the space itself was first used by the agency to house the Expelled Students Pilot Program, Level 300 was initially perceived as VIP/youth engagement territory and thus, by contrast, the EMYS' second floor space became associated with the clinical work of the centre. This initial perceptual dichotomization maintained itself despite our valiant rhetorical efforts to equate youth engagement practices with a strengths-based approach to treatment. This exacerbated pre-existing communication challenges within the agency which had arisen in reaction to growth, expansion and technology.

We are pleased to suggest that over the last twelve months as a result of a convergence of serendipitous actions, the boundaries between EMYS youth engagement/community and clinical work have diminished. Perhaps it was the assignment of "boundary spanners," clinical staff who were assigned for consultation purposes to our community teams. Or, perhaps it was the decision to assign accountability for our CIC programmes which operate on Level 300 to our clinical staff. Then there was the imperative of running a developmental program for youth with Aspergers Syndrome in the space as well given a dearth of other suitable sites. Our Day Treatment Program also made arrangements for their clients to participate in Studio 2 as part of their weekly curriculum schedule. Thus, EMYS staff inadvertently, on both sides of what is clearly becoming a diminished divide, broke down barriers and shared responsibilities for program development and service provision. Our future plans which we anticipate will leverage this momentum in this regard include the possibilities of organizing VIP bullying prevention workshops for youth in our ACYES program as well as providing our VIP staff with training opportunities with respect to issues related to trauma, post traumatic stress disorder and attachment disorders.

The organic integration between levels 2 and 3, or as we might metaphorically refer to as between the value of both learned and lived experience, bodes well for the future of the centre. It speaks to our ability to challenge one another to how we think about the way we do business and affect required change. Subsequent to Accreditation 2010, EMYS will embark on another Strategic Planning effort. During the course of the discussions leading up to the current service planning exercise, several key issues emerged which we believe will challenge the very understanding of our 36 year old organizational identity. Among these are: the age range of youth served which has risen significantly, the increased identification of parents with mental illness, the increased incidence of PTSD and trauma especially amongst youth from diverse communities, the increase in all program referrals from the child welfare sector, the reduction in residential treatment and child welfare bed usage, the emergence of EMYS expertise as it is brought to bear on those struggling with settlement and immigration experiences, and our reputation for growing excellence in community development, pre employment programming and youth engagement strategies. These and other service issues will be discussed within the context of the threat of diminished government funding, the lack of a moneyed donor base, the underfunding of our per diem residential programmes and several of our VIP programs, and finally the chronic underfunding of all of our community based mental health programs.

Thinking and planning will form the bulk of our organizational work for 2010-2011. EMYS has a committed Board of Directors, a very strong staff team and a history and reputation for service excellence. Thus, we are confident that this work will be tackled with the combination of adherence to the mission, principles and values we hold, of our inherent capacity to rise and then raise the bar when confronted with challenge and our talent for pragmatic strategic decision making.